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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1909.

THE END OF THE FIGHT.

Richmond's longest and hardest fight is over, and the victory is here. Clear water, the bright goal of many a muddy year, is a thing accomplished. The new system is in regular normal operation as this is being written. Powerful electric pumps are even now driving vast streams of real and limpid aqua pura from the settling basin to the reservoir. Thence it will be drawn out through innumerable house-pipes to serve the good pleasure of the people of Richmond. This will not happen in an hour. Till the pumping began yesterday the reservoirs and mains were full of muddy water and lined with the dirt deposits of years. The water must be drawn off and the deposits washed out before perfect results can be expected. But probably some difference will be noticeable before nightfall, and a week should dispose of the last reminders of the old reign of mud.

The official inspection of the new water system to-day means a great personal triumph for Charles E. Bolling. A man might live a long time and stand much criticism and abuse to emerge with the flying colors that are his to-day. To him the laurels of victory must be peculiarly sweet. We need not go back now and rehearse the story of continued catastrophe that has made this great enterprise seem at times the favorite butt of the seven devils of misfortune. It is enough to say now that the talk of Mr. Bolling's supposed incompetency a year ago, of the likelihood of another failure in the building of the flume—all this criticism is completely and forever refuted by the happy outcome. If the new flume had popped open at the final testing the other day there is no end to the abuse that would have been heaped upon him. He understood this. But absolutely confident of his ability to construct a perfect conduit, provided only that his instructions were obeyed, he tackled the job again, this time with triumphant success. The sedimentation plant is the child of his brain and hand, and to him the chief honors are everywhere awarded. The people of Richmond may well rejoice now that his resignation was not asked for last January. It is quite certain that no new engineer would have given us clear water at this time or anywhere near this time.

Chairman Mills, of the Water Committee, regards the completion of a clear water system as "the greatest step in advance the city of Richmond has ever made." This estimate is not at all extravagant. Long usage has made us so used to the muddy water that it is no longer a matter of course after a while. But never was there a stranger, in our gates who was not shocked and affronted by the first sight of the morn's hellebore. That tub has been a standing advertisement of the worst sort for Richmond. It has marked and labeled her progressiveness in the worst possible way. A clear-water city on a muddy-water river will get advertisement of quite another sort. But far over and beyond these considerations is the personal delight in baths free of all high-tints and draughts that the house-father never knew.

THE FIRST STEP TOWARD EQUALIZATION.

One of the concluding acts of the Senate Finance Committee, which adjourned yesterday, was to appoint a subcommittee to draw up a bill looking to the equalization of taxes in Virginia. The Finance Committee's sessions here have been valuable and instructive in many ways, but nothing that it did is more important than this. It is the first definite step toward reform of conditions which have long since reached the proportions of a State scandal. Reassessment cannot possibly cure these conditions. The whole level might be largely raised while the preposterous disparity between assessments were left untouched.

A rigid equality between assessments and a sense of even justice among assessors are demanded by the elemental principles of fair play. The State can no longer afford to be lax and complacent about this matter. Her legitimate expenditures have increased so largely that it has become necessary for her to command every dollar properly belonging to her. Under the present shiffling, unfair and utterly indefensible system, there is no doubt that the State's losses run well up into the hundreds of thousands every year.

WHEN KINGS ARE BURIED.

Belgium will rejoice to-day at the throne of her new King, as she was outwardly mourning yesterday at the bier of her old one. When the last thunders died away from the saluting battery at Laken the final chant ended in a cathedral, the people hurried away to change their mourning garments for clothes of joy. This morn-

ing they hoist gaily-colored flags where banners floated at half-mast yesterday.

We are told in the cable dispatches that the outward grief of the people at the obsequies poorly concealed their inward joy. Reverence for royalty required forms which the real sentiment of the nation did not prompt. The reports state, also, that the King's testamentary wishes for a quiet and unostentatious funeral were neglected. All the pomp and ceremony that the little kingdom could muster marked the burial rites of the old monarch.

Both of these incidents fully accord with the traditions of monarchism. History is full of joyful funerals and hollow ceremonialism when nations put to earth the ashes of unjust rulers. When, for example, the infidel King of France, best known as the lover of Madame Pompadour, died of the smallpox, the country fairly shouted for joy. The court hurried away to escape the pest, and did not think of mourning until a vault inclosed the body of the King. When, too, George IV, at last died, his Cabinet could scarce repress its delight, and his country breathed a sigh of relief. Perhaps it was the genuine gratification of the people that led them to show such enthusiasm in pompous, empty funerals in cases like these. They were well rid of their hated rulers and could afford to give them splendid burials.

But there have been also many times when the entombment of a beloved King was the occasion for genuine, heart-felt public regret. When the Emperor Charles the Great died, the nation demanded that he be not buried. He was placed on a throne in a stone chamber at Aachen, with sceptre in hand and royal robes around him. A thousand years later reverent antiquarians found his body little changed with time. In the same way, when Queen Elizabeth died, Shakespeare doubtless did not too greatly exaggerate the popular regret when he declared the very fishes wept in the wake of the funeral barge.

This is as it should be. When a King joins the vast silent army of the dead, his fame is measured, like that of any other man, solely by his deeds.

THE STATE COMMITTEE AND THE PRIMARY.

The Democratic State Central Committee has been a good deal criticized for its supposedly subtle indifference to the Roanoke convention's orders about legalizing the primary. The convention told the committee to present a legalization bill to the Legislature which meets in Richmond on January 12, 1910. Many months have passed since then, the convening of the Legislature is just around the corner and the committee has not lifted a hand. "Persistence in this course," remarked the Norfolk Landmark, "truly enough, not long since, 'could be mutiny.' But now it turns out that the committee is occupying a blameless position. It is not mutinous or insurgent or red-headed at all. A meeting of the special subcommittee having this matter in charge will be held in Richmond early in January and the legalization bill will be prepared in plenty of time for presentation to the Legislature."

Thus another point of discussion, another crescent controversy, is cleared up and eliminated from the world of men. It is nobody's business at what time the committee carries out the instructions of the superior body, so long as it duly carries them out. Chairman Ellyson says that he has purposely deferred the work to the last minute in order that the committee might have the benefit of the latest public thought on the complicated question. Surely there is sound sense in this position. No doubt the work of a few days will be enough to turn out the draft of a bill, and the committee can adjourn with the knowledge that it has so far faithfully carried out the will of the convention. No duty will then remain to it in connection with the primary except the study of plans for "further protecting it" to be offered to the party convention of 1912.

That the committee will recommend a primary law which all of us will think perfect is far beyond the dreams of optimism. Irreconcilable contradictions in opinion exist on many important points. Peter will have to be disappointed to please Paul, and vice versa. Let us merely voice the general hope that the committee's deliberations may be marked by wisdom and crowned with results appropriate in every way to the resolutions and ideals of a New Year.

A TWO-CLASS RATE NEEDED IN THE POST-OFFICE.

The other day The Times-Dispatch suggested that the Post-Office Department should permit mailers of Christmas packages to put in a few words of writing without changing the rate on the packages. Now we note that the New York Evening Post carries the same idea very much further. The Post proposes that writing to any extent be allowed at any time in unscheduled packages which pay a minimum of two cents postage. "Merchandise," argues the Post, "would pay merchandise rates, books would pay book rates, quite regardless of the question whether they carried written matter or not, provided only that there was as much postage on them as would carry an ordinary letter—two cents." We fully sympathize with the Post's desire for the utmost liberality and common sense and freedom from red tape here, but our contemporary, we are afraid, is quite wrong in thinking that its proposal would result "in no loss of revenue worth mentioning." Except in so far as it would stimulate letter-writing with packages—which it certainly would do—it would represent a two-cent loss to the post-office in nearly every case. The vast majority of packages pay at least two cents, and the letters which now bring highly profitable revenue to the post-office

would slip into them without changing their weight appreciably and netting no revenue at all, even at package rates.

There is, however, a clearer and fairer way of settling this question of personal writing in packages, a way which would deprive the department of no revenue at all and would be of enormous assistance and benefit to the public. You wish to mail, let us say, a package of books weighing forty ounces, postage 20 cents. Along with it you wish to send a letter weighing half an ounce, postage, by itself, 2 cents. Send the two separately and they cost 22 cents. Send them together, as most of us naturally desire to do, and they cost 52 cents. By an absurd fiction the books are viewed as having converted themselves into personal letters the moment the half-ounce of writing is included with them. The charge for transporting the identical matter is virtually quadrupled. Yet the post-office's service, or its trouble, is not increased by a whit. In fact it is appreciably diminished, since in the first case it must handle and deliver two pieces of matter, one of them first-class, while in the latter it handles but one piece, and that one at third-class.

Is there any bit of sense, reason or justice in this ancient and curious tradition? Why in the world should the post-office handle two-class matter at a two-class rate? Why shouldn't it allow a letter in a package at the package rate plus two cents for the letter? That is the only just basis for computing charges. The department would not have to handle such matter at first-class. It would still remain third or fourth-class matter handled as that matter is, sent unsealed and subject to being opened for inspection. And if it is urged that people would put in overweight letters, or several letters, and that the post-office would practically have to rely on the word of the mailer, we reply that this is exactly the case now. We fear a great many persons include letters in packages which they do not declare and sometimes flatly deny, and they do this with perfect safety. That the office opens many of the packages consigned to it, or ever will or could, nobody who has cut his eye-teeth even dimly suspects.

We sincerely hope that the discovery of the South Pole can be pulled off without any such tragedies.

Would you, reader, split on the Sugar Trust for a million?

Mr. Roosevelt can hardly fail to consider that his Annals Society broke up a year too soon.

Congress has voted itself a two weeks' holiday. In fact, a Congressional holiday is mostly fence-mending and holidays.

The esteemed Aldermen of New York, having formerly bestowed the freedom of the city on Dr. Cook, are now thinking of withdrawing it. We are able to assure them that the Doc will never miss it.

Mr. Roosevelt is receiving visits from the King of Uganda, which is nothing at all to a man who has long been hob-nobbing with the King of the forests.

Wonder how our dear old Itookishoo will receive the news?

If "The Woman With the Serpent's Tongue" were only a better poem, we could feel even more sympathy with Mr. Watson.

One of the finest things about Senator Le Follette that he doesn't care in the least whose toes he steps on.

Well, don't put it off till 10 o'clock Christmas Eve anyway.

The Dr. Cook episode is positively the grandest chance the "I Told You Soers" have had in half a century.

We don't believe it will be possible for Congress to do anything this session but appropriate and investigate.

Many of our prudent little star-eyed blondes are already laying in a few little trifles for Christmas, 1910.

We are now compiling tables to show that 34 per cent. of the men of the country and 93 per cent. of the women never use any other punctuation mark than the dash.

TAT'S PHILOSOPHY.

Should Not It Include Government "Cheer Up Home?"

President Taft did not hold out to the inmates of the Bowery mission any hope of financial aid or propose for their consideration any governmental reform whereby the lot of the unemployed might be permanently alleviated. Instead, he preached the doctrine of patience, forbearance and faith that their more fortunate fellow-beings were not greedy and grasping, but willing to help the needy.

Of the multitude of remedies which sociologists and reformers have for the cure and prevention of diseases of the body politic the President took no note. He simply told his hearers that although they were at present "down on their luck," they ought to look forward to brighter days.

But never a word spoke he of paternalistic aid from government—never mentioned colonies for tramps, old-age pensions, such as the English people now have, and which the French are preparing for, nor hinted at possible plans of insurance for working people against sickness or death, such as the Germans, for instance, have established.

"Cheer up!" was his Christmas message to the unfortunate of the Bowery.

But when later in the evening he spoke on foreign missions he emphatically declared that the nation ought to spend money in regulating the affairs of other countries, as it did in freeing Cuba, for example. The Bowery reticence concerning financial aid from the government disappeared. Said he:

"We are a nation with tremendous power and wealth, and unless we use that for the benefit of our international neighbors, we are falling to discharge the duties that we owe to the members of the international community."

Some persons, not necessarily sociologists or socialistic cranks, but good-fellowed beings, will be moved to quote, with slight variation, an ancient proverb, "Government charity should begin at home."—Boston Globe.

Borrowed Jingles

THE CHRISTMAS EDITIONS.

Santa Claus looked at his paper, and snatched up a bundle of toys. "They will think I forgot them," he shouted.

"The dear little girls and the boys. Mr. Sweeney's was for his morning. The Christmas editions are out. I fear that my senses are failing. What have I been thinking about?"

He leaped in his auto and breaking all speed laws that ever were made, he long he arrived in the city.

In his winter regalia arrayed, he stood in the stockings were waiting. "Hing up by the heels, in a row, and no trace in the parlor was waiting. With thine and taper aglow."

He hailed a man who belated. "Was hurrying home through the night. 'Tis Santa Claus, just look at the papers. You see it is Christmas all right."

"Fie, fie!" laughed the stranger, "you're going back to your pipe and your bed. For these are the Christmas editions. And printed some three weeks ahead."

—Mina Irving, in Leslie's.

MERELY JOKING.

He Will Pass. George: "Do you think that I'm good enough for you, darling?" Darling: "No, George, but you're too good for any other girl."—Illustrated Bits.

That Is Doubtful. "We are now exactly a thousand feet above the level of the sea." "What sea?" "The sea book doesn't say."—Don Vivant.

An Observant Kid. "Ready for Christmas, Johnny?" "You bet." "You believe in Santa Claus, don't you?" "You believe in Santa Claus, don't you?" "What's that?" "Washington Herald."

Sensible Doctor. "I guess my doctor understands human nature pretty well." "Why so?" "He put me on a diet and ordered me not to start until after Christmas."—Houston Chronicle.

Supplying a Demand. "They have some pretty expensive Christmas cards nowadays." "According to the demand for them. When a girl gets a \$50 set of four or five-cent cards will do for a return gift."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The Contrary Child. "How unreasonable baby is!" "How now?" "According to the thermometer, the water is just right, and yet he persists in turning blue."—Kansas City Journal.

PERTINENT POINTS.

SENATOR MONEY knows his children were worthy and competent, and he with some of the great economists of the world. Therefore, it was a loyal and jealous regard for the public welfare that induced him to appoint his immediate family to office. Houston Post.

The feminine shopper who has had basket-ball training has a real advantage over her sister who has been compelled to get along without liberal education. St. Louis Republic.

With a former umpire at the head of the National League, pugnacious players will probably be extremely prudent about their place and position they seek to relieve their minds at the expense of the preceding potentates of the pastime. Providence Journal.

In Philadelphia a Russian woman 19 years old is dead, leaving 20 descendants. And Emma Tumbo is not here to make an oration at her grave and boost a monument fund. Louisville Courier-Journal.

If Dr. Elliot actually wants to benefit humankind, let him publish a five-foot shopping list. New York Mail.

If man be what he eats, as Dr. Wiley says, the pure food problem seems to be drifting toward a solution. And who is to blame for a new meaning is given to "man for man." Washington Post.

POOR MAN'S BUTTER.

Congress Asked to Remove Tax on Imitation Article.

Representative Burleson has introduced a bill repealing the tax on oleomargarine. That is excellent. But in lieu of the tax on the product Mr. Burleson would impose a tax on its manufacture and sale—\$500 per annum to be paid by manufacturers.

Why any tax at all? Butter is one of the necessities, and oleomargarine, its chemical equivalent, is not less so. Indeed, it merits the name of "the poor man's butter," since it can be produced wholesomely and sold much cheaper than the product of the dairy.

The history of the manufacture and sale of this innocent product has been that of continual fraud and legal evasion. But the greater fraud of all is the tax laid upon it, thereby enabling the butter-making interests to obtain a monopoly of the market. It is more than a shame to be taxed to exact a tax of 10 cents a pound upon oleomargarine that has been treated with butter color, when the law permits butter to be artificially colored without a tax. We think the unconditional repeal of all taxes upon the substitute for butter and the right to manufacture the product of the dairy that it be stamped "Oleomargarine" on every package, would do away at once with the fraud and the tax.

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PRIVILEGED TO DON GREEN-TAILED COAT

Roosevelt May Also Wear Plume in Chapeau and Laced Trousers.

RARE HONOR IS ACCORDED

Election to Academy of Moral and Political Sciences Slender Given to American.

BY LA MARQUISE DE FONTENOY.

BY Theodore Roosevelt's almost unanimous election on Saturday last to a foreign associate membership of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences of France, he becomes a member of that world-famous organization known as the Institute of France, that institute to which the late Duke d'Angoulême at his death bequeathed his beautiful Palace of Chantilly, with all the priceless art treasures, with which it was filled, and the stately manor by which it is surrounded. The distinction bestowed upon the former President of the United States is one rarely accorded to Americans that it may be as well to explain just what is the Institute of France, of which he will now be entitled to wear the uniform, of a green-tailed coat, richly embroidered with small palm leaves in green silk, trousers laced in a similar fashion, a chaqueta trimmed with black ostrich feathers, and a pearl-handled sword scabbard, the uniform, in one word, in which M. Darboux figured recently in New York City, at the ceremonies of the inauguration of the new President of France at all the ceremonies in connection with the Hudson-Fulton celebration.

The Institute of France, which dates from 1795, when the Republican Convention called it into existence, in defiance of the great assault upon it by the Convention of 1804, is composed of five academies, some of them antedating by 150 years the great Revolution. In fact, each of the five academies is a different time, the oldest of them all being the so-called Academie Francaise. The second is the Academie des Sciences, the third the Academie des Lettres, the fourth is the Academie des Beaux Arts, and the fifth is the Academie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. The latter is the one to which Theodore Roosevelt has been elected, and was founded in 1832, by a decree of King Louis Philippe. This academy is divided into five sections, namely, philosophy, moral and political sciences, jurisprudence, political economy and history.

Each of the five academies has its own special jurisdiction and work, with some overlap of jurisdiction, and is appointed for life, with an official residence on the premises, various allowances and a salary of 7,000 francs. Members of the academies are chosen in equal numbers from each of the academies, and once a year a meeting of all the members of the various academies takes place on October 18, the anniversary of the organization of the Institute. All the members of the Institute and of the academies, including an annual stipend of 1,200 francs to each member, are defrayed by the State. The Institute is the property of the French nation, and in addition to the Institute owns rich endowments, such as the domain of the domain and the Palace of Chantilly.

The home of the Institute of France is the old College of the Four Nations, founded by Louis XIV. on the site of the Tour de Nesle of mysterious tragic memories, and facing the Louvre on the opposite side of the Seine. The building is a masterpiece of the well-known priceless collection of books and manuscripts bequeathed to the College of the Four Nations by Cardinal Mazarin, and to the Academy of France by Cardinal Richelieu, escaped pillage and destruction at the time of the Revolution. The building is a masterpiece of the well-known priceless collection of books and manuscripts bequeathed to the College of the Four Nations by Cardinal Mazarin, and to the Academy of France by Cardinal Richelieu, escaped pillage and destruction at the time of the Revolution.

Of Americans who have belonged to the Institute of France, the only one comprised in the Institute of France, is Louis, of New York, who bears abroad the title of duke, conferred by the Emperor of Russia. He is a member of the Academie des Sciences and Belles Lettres. John S.argent is the sole American member of the Academie des Sciences. While the Academie des Sciences has the name of Professor Alexander Agassiz, of Cambridge, Mass., and also of the late Professor Newcomb, of Washington, on its roster, Theodore Roosevelt is the only American member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences.

There is also a National Academy of Medicine in France, composed of 100 members, responsible to the government for all sorts of questions relating to medical research, and receiving a large sum from the State. But it does not form part of the Institute of France.

In none of the obituaries of old Grand Duke Michael of Russia, who died on Saturday last, at the age of nearly eighty, has any mention been made of the fact that he was a member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. The support which he gave to the present Czar in the matter was all the more remarkable in view of the fact that he was at the time the only surviving son of Nicholas I., the most reactionary and despotic monarch of Russia since the days of Peter the Great.

The Grand Duke's venerable prince made a point of being present at all the meetings of the Council of the Empire, and his grandnephew, Nicholas II., to discuss the framing of the Constitution, fighting vigorously the opposition of some of the other members of the Council, and in the end, the Imperial court, and a most influential member of the old nobility, put forward the plea that the aristocracy was "entitled to special prerogatives and privileges under the law Constitution, in recognition of its services to the empire." The grand duke angrily interrupted him, and in that loud and sonorous tone of voice which distinguished his utterances, exclaimed:

"If I had been in the place of Alexander Alexandrovitch, I would not have ventured to speak of the services of the nobility to the empire. Where the nobles have been, there have been the peasantry to the very marrow without giving them anything whatsoever in return—not even the slightest attempt to improve their condition, or their education. The nobles have monopolized all well-paid government offices, and through their intolerable neglect have brought confusion into every branch of the administration. The nobles were only to be found when there were any lawless and dishonest nobles to be employed, and they were mainly responsible for the present unfortunate and chaotic condition of affairs. It is perfect nonsense to talk of the services of the nobles to the empire."

No member of the reigning house of Russia ever enjoyed a greater amount of regard, respect and even veneration than this patriarch of the nobles. He was the Grand Duke, daughter is the Crown Princess of Germany. No attempt was ever made upon his life, even by the most ardent of Nicholas II. He was entirely safe from any harm at his hands. A

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